

The School Approval Process: Criteria and Procedures for Nonpublic School Registration, Approval and Accreditation.

Section I

General Information

It is the purpose of the school approval process to provide each school in Connecticut with an opportunity to assure its clients that the school is indeed in conformity with certain standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

The criteria and procedures are designed to serve the purpose of providing the state with one or more of the following three assurances:

- that schools are **registered** with State Department of Education for attendance purposes **only**;
- that schools are **approved** for their compliance with a program of self-evaluation and state review (as to the level of compliance); and
- that schools are **accredited** by a recognized agency as a result of a self-evaluation, an on-site visit and an ongoing process of self-improvement.

It is intended that, as a result of these criteria and procedures, each school within the state will be provided not only with a vehicle for registration but also as incentive for involvement in a program of improvement of educational quality.

Section II

This section of the website contains information for those individuals who are interested in starting a private school or who are interested in the State Department of Education's criteria and procedures for nonpublic school registration and approval and/or accreditation.

Must a school register with the State Department of Education?

School registration is a voluntary matter for the individual school. School registration is a procedure whereby a school submits basic information concerning its operation. School registration does not include or imply State Department of Education approval or the quality of the school's programs. However, a school

must file attendance information with the State Department of education on the ED 594 attendance form in order to qualify for health services and transportation. (Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-184)

What is the procedure for a school to *register* with the State Department of Education?

Schools seeking registration shall:

- notify the State Department of Education in writing of their intention to seek school registration. The State Department of Education shall provide each applicant school all information related to school registration, approval and agency recognition.
- file the completed application, available from the State Department of Education, for Initial Registration of a Nonpublic School for Attendance Purposes only.
- submit current certificates of approval by fire and health authorities.

How long is the term of registration?

The period of initial registration for a school shall be one year. For each of the following three years, a school must submit a continuing application for registration. In the fifth year a school must submit a renewal application or registration and repeat the entire cycle.

Must a school be *approved* by the State Department of Education?

School approval is a voluntary matter for the individual school. It may be achieved by application of the school directly to the State Board of Education or through an approved accrediting agency.

What agencies have the State Board of Education recognized as *accrediting* agencies?

The following agencies are recognized by the State Board of Education to recommend school accreditation to the State Board of Education:

- The Connecticut Association of Independent Schools
- The New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- The Norwich Diocesan School Office
- The Hartford Diocesan School Office
- The Bridgeport Diocesan School Office
- The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod School Office
- The Association of Christian Schools International

What are the procedures for a school to be *accredited* by a recognized agency?

Schools seeking accreditation through an approved accreditation agency shall:

- Contact the recognized agency and request the agency's guidelines and conditions for approval from that agency.
- Complete all the requirements outlined by the recognized agency.
- Request that the recognized agency submit to the State Department of Education a copy of the visiting committee's report and the formal notification from the agency to the school regarding the school's accreditation; and
- Submit copies of the current clearance by fire and health authorities to the State Department of Education.

What is the procedure for a school to be *approved* by the State Department of Education?

A school may seek State Board of Education approval by direct application to the State Department of Education. The criteria and procedures approved by the State Board of Education are outlined below.

- Notify the State Department of Education in writing of the intention to seek state approval. The State Department of Education shall send the applicant school a copy of the guidelines and procedures for school approval. A school designated as a candidate for approval has two years to complete all steps necessary for approval or shall submit a new application.
- Conduct a self-evaluation applying the state approval criteria.
- Prepare a written report of the findings and recommendations of the self-evaluation, copies of which will be submitted to the State Department of Education.
- Host a visiting committee selected by the State Department of Education. The visiting committee's report shall be prepared by the chairperson of the committee and a draft shall be submitted to the chief administrative officer of the school being evaluated to review the visiting committee's report for factual accuracy.
- Submit current certificates of approval by fire and health authorities.

Are there any other requirements that a private school must address?

- Each schoolhouse, as defined in C.G.S. section 10-203 must provide sufficient number of suitable flush toilets, hand washing facilities “that can be readily supervised by staff or be in separate rooms for boys and girls.”
- All schools, public and private, must provide toilet accommodations, water supply, drinking cups, washing facilities, heating, light and ventilation, which are maintained in sanitary condition. (Public Health Code Regulation: Section 19-13-B30)

For additional information, please contact Roni Skerker at 860-566-1998

Section III

This section of the website contains information frequently requested by individuals who are considering a private school for their child.

Does the State Department of Education approve all nonpublic schools?

School approval is a voluntary matter for the individual schools. In Connecticut, schools may operate *without* State Department of Education approval. However, to qualify for special services such as transportation and nursing services, a school must at least file attendance information on the ED 594 pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-188.

Does an approved nonpublic school meet the same standards that public schools meet?

The State Department of Education evaluates each school in terms of its stated purposes and objectives, which provide the framework for determining the program’s effectiveness. In other words, a nonpublic school should offer equivalent instruction to that offered in the public schools.

In order to be approved the nonpublic school must complete the following steps:

- Notify the State Department of Education in writing of the intention to seek state approval. The State Department of Education shall send the applicant school a copy of the guidelines and procedures for school approval. A school designated as a candidate for approval has two years to complete all steps necessary for approval or shall submit a new application.
- Conduct a self-evaluation applying the state approval criteria.

- Prepare a written report of the findings and recommendations of the self-evaluation, copies of which will be submitted to the State Department of Education.
- Host a visiting committee selected by the State Department of Education. The visiting committee's report shall be prepared by the chairperson of the committee and a draft shall be submitted to the chief administrative officer of the school being evaluated to review the visiting committee's report for factual accuracy.
- Submit current certificates of approval by fire and health authorities.

Do teachers and/or administrators in nonpublic schools meet the same certification criteria as teachers in the public school?

Nonpublic schoolteachers and/or administrators are not required to meet the same certification requirements as teachers in the public schools.

What services must the public school provide students in nonpublic schools?

Public schools must provide transportation to all students within district boundaries and must provide services as directed by specific federal grants. Most local school districts develop working relationships with nonpublic schools within their district to ensure that all children receive an equitable education.

Are there other services that a public school must provide students in nonpublic schools?

Students attending nonprofit, nonpublic schools are entitled to receive health services at public expense. These services include the services of a school physician, school nurse and dental hygienist.

Nonpublic schools may participate in the school breakfast program, lunch and other feeding programs.

Must nonpublic schools follow the same school calendar as public schools?

There are no statutory requirements for the length of the school day or year in nonpublic schools. Nonpublic schools have the option to develop their own school calendar based on the goals and objectives of that particular school. However, instruction should be equivalent to state minimum requirements of 180 days and 900 hours of instruction.

For additional information, please call Roni Skerker at 860-566-1998

Section IV

*Schools listed below have been **approved** according to the “Criteria and Procedures for Public and Nonpublic School Approval” adopted by the State Board of Education on April 7, 1982.*

* This section under revision as of 6/18/01.